

FC209.23 Cambridgeshire County Council Weed Spraying Policy

From: Steve Count Cllr <Steve.Count@cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 3:10 PM

Subject: Weeds

Dear Parish clerk and chair,

I am sure you have become aware recently of the dreadful state of our roads, pavements and cycleways due to weeds. This is entirely due to a change in policy the current joint administration forced through in February of this year. As part of that change they promised to engage with Parishes and Towns, but we have seen no evidence of that at all. The County Council have stopped all cyclic weedkilling (ie annual spraying) as well as spraying before laying new surfaces such as slurry on footpaths. Residents across the county have asked us what we can do about it and we (the Conservative group) will present a motion to full council on October 18th. If you agree that the state of our roads, paths and cycleways are unacceptable and getting worse due to weeds there are two ways you can help.

- 1/ Please sign and circulate this petition, to show those in charge at County Council the will of the people on this matter. This is the link, <https://shorturl.at/dkFTZ>
- 2/ Please consider writing as a Parish or Town body to object to this current change in policy and ask for a reversal.

Please write in your own words or below is an example template you can use to personalise and alter to fit the wishes of your council as they see fit. At the end are the relevant people and officers you should consider including.

To Cambridgeshire County Council

Please accept this formal objection on behalf of **insert name of council** to the change in weedkilling policy the County Council implemented this year. Our roads, cycleways and footpaths are in a dreadful state due to the explosion of weeds since your policy change. This has an unacceptable detrimental effect on the look, usability, and cost of repair to our highways. Our residents are angry at how you have made our community look. Those who attempt active travel are angry at the state of the weed ridden paths they must dodge. We are deeply concerned at the effect this will have on flash flooding, as gully's and drains become blocked by weeds. We also are aware of the poisonous danger posed to horses by the rapid increase in Ragwort in our area.. As a council we cannot understand the short-sighted financial nature of this decision, as short-term gain will be overshadowed by future repair bills. We are further dismayed that the County Council would implement such a devastating cut to a vital service with no consultation **(or no meaningful consultation)** with our council. This blatant attempt at cost shunting onto our council is unacceptable.

We therefore call on those whose decision this was, the "Joint administration" to reverse their disastrous policy. *

We ask that the chief executive Stephen Moir, takes urgent action to remove weeds across the County. (stephen.moir@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

We ask that the Chair of Highways, issues a public statement to reverse this dreadful decision and explain the immediate actions the County Council will be taking to address this. (alex.beckett@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

We ask the monitoring officer to investigate how a major cut to services was allowed take place without engagement with Town and Parish Councils.

emma.duncan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

*(The Joint Administration is a pact between Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents, please copy in their leaders, lucy.nethsingha@cambridgeshire.gov.uk, elisa.meschini@cambridgeshire.gov.uk, tom.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Steve Count

Councillor for March North

Mob; 07989 032456

email; steve.count@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Blog site; <http://cllrstevecount.wordpress.com>

Twitter; @stevecount

Our Ref: FJ/AIR/254

Your Ref:

Date: 08 September 2023

Contact: Frank Jordan

Telephone: 01223 715660

E Mail: frank.jordan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Frank Jordan
Executive Director
Place and Sustainability

New Shire Hall
Emery Crescent
Enterprise Campus
Alconbury Weald
PE28 4YE

Dear Colleague,

Weed Spraying Policy

In April 2023, the Council changed its operational policy in relation to the removal of weeds. The purpose of the change was to achieve two goals;

1. To improve the natural environment and biodiversity by reducing the use of chemicals that can have a detrimental environmental impact.
2. To reduce the running costs of the operations as part of the overall need to reduce costs across the Council as part of its budget planning process.

The policy change moved the Council away from carrying out cyclic chemical spraying of road edges, channels and footpaths to a risk-based approach where we will remove weeds where they present a hazard to road users. We will however pre-treat weeds ahead of any works that we undertake such as resurfacing or slurry sealing.

Generally, weeds are not a safety issue for road users. They can be unsightly but do not affect their safety unless they build up significantly to become a trip or visibility hazard. When we are made aware of concerns by the public and communities, we will assess the risk the reported weeds present and then determine what action to take.

We are, however, assessing the effect of the policy change and how it was implemented. We do recognise that the County Council should have engaged with its partners in district and parish councils more effectively at the time when this policy change was being considered, and then when it was implemented, and that is something we wish to improve upon.

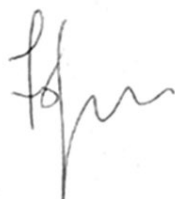
In addition, now we are coming to the end of the growing season we are reviewing the impact of the change in both rural and urban areas. We will be considering changes to our approach when we have the assessment results and presenting this to members so that this can be considered further as we prepare the budget for future years.

In undertaking this review, we will engage with district and parish councils to better understand the impacts of the policy and what changes we could make to improve our approach in the future. We will therefore be writing to all parish councils and districts with a survey which will ask for evidence to be provided as to what the impact has been in their areas and how this has created additional risk and safety issues on the highway.

I appreciate the time taken by our partners in highlighting this issue and I want to provide assurance that we wish to engage with you as we undertake the review of this policy change.

In the meantime, where there are locations reported to the Council where weed growth is seen to be a problem, these will be inspected and, if required, action will be taken to remove them.

Yours sincerely,



Frank Jordan.
Executive Director of Place and Sustainability.